

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



FISCAL MEMORANDUM

HB 703 – SB 907

March 4, 2013

SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL BILL: Authorizes a county election commission, by a super majority vote, to participate in a pilot program and establish convenient voting centers on Election Day. Requires the county election commission to submit a written plan to the Coordinator of Elections for approval prior to implementing such centers. Exempts counties using convenient voting centers from the requirements of Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-3-303, which requires elections be held in certain polling places.

FISCAL IMPACT OF ORIGINAL BILL:

Decrease State Expenditures –
\$90,900/FY15-16 and Every Four Years Thereafter

Increase Local Expenditures – \$83,500/FY13-14/Permissive

Decrease Local Expenditures –
\$181,700/FY14-15 and Every Two Years Thereafter/Permissive
\$90,900/FY17-18 and Every Four Years Thereafter/Permissive

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENT (004053): Limits the number of counties participating in the pilot project to five. Requires each participating election commission to submit to the coordinator of elections, a report that describes the results of the pilot project.

FISCAL IMPACT OF BILL WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Decrease State Expenditures –
\$45,400/FY15-16 and Every Four Years Thereafter

Increase Local Expenditures – \$41,800/FY13-14/Permissive

Decrease Local Expenditures –
\$90,900/FY14-15 and Every Two Years Thereafter/Permissive
\$45,400/FY17-18 and Every Four Years Thereafter/Permissive

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Assumptions for the bill as amended:

- Based on information provided by the Secretary of State, expenditures associated with elections will decrease as a result of implementation of the proposed pilot program. Given the likelihood for reduced election expenditures, and further given the bill as amended establishes no sunset provision that would effectively terminate the proposed pilot program, it is assumed that a majority of counties participating will continue utilizing convenient voting centers into perpetuity.
- Exempting counties from the requirements of Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-3-303 will result in participating counties closing some of the existing polling locations and opening a limited number of convenient voting centers.
- According to the Division of Elections, there will be a one-time cost to initiate the new convenient voting centers, which includes the cost of publications and mailings.
- According to the Division of Elections, and based on information provided by ten counties willing to participate in the pilot project, the initial startup cost will be approximately \$166,990 for local governments. This will be partially offset by local savings of \$83,472 from closing polling places.
- The five counties that will be approved to participate in the pilot project cannot be determined. The precise fiscal impact will vary depending on which five counties are approved for participation in the program. It is estimated that the impact resulting from five counties participating in the program will be approximately 50 percent of the impact of ten counties participating.
- The initial startup cost will be approximately \$83,495 ($\$166,990 \times 50\%$) for local governments. This will be partially offset by local savings of \$41,736 ($\$83,472 \times 50\%$) from closing polling places.
- The net impact will be a one-time permissive increase in local government expenditures of \$41,759 ($\$83,495 - \$41,736$) in FY13-14.
- Based on information provided by the Coordinator of Elections, in subsequent elections the decrease in expenditures is estimated to be \$45,434 per election.
- In FY15-16, the only election held will be the Presidential Preference Primary. The state pays the cost of elections in these years. A decrease in state expenditures estimated to be \$45,434 and every four years thereafter.
- A permissive decrease in local government expenditures estimated to be \$90,868 ($\$45,434 \times 2$ elections) in FY14-15 and every two years thereafter (based on August and November elections).
- A permissive decrease in local government expenditures estimated to be \$45,434 in FY17-18 and every four years thereafter.
- Any costs associated with the county election commissions submitting participation plans, or for the Coordinator of Elections to submit reports with legislative committees, is estimated to be not significant.

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucian D. Geise". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lucian" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Geise".

Lucian D. Geise, Executive Director

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